Los Angeles, California 90025 310.477.1700 phone • 310.477.1699 fax 10

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, WESTERN DIVISION

THOMAS CHAYRA, INDIVIDUALLY AND ON BEHALF OF ALL OTHERS SIMILARLY SITUATED,

Plaintiff,

٧.

7-ELEVEN, INC.,

Defendant.

COMPLAÎNT

<u>COMPLAINT</u>

TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE OF SAID COURT:

Plaintiff THOMAS CHAYRA, individually, and on behalf of all others similarly situated ("Plaintiff"), alleges upon knowledge with respect to himself and upon information and belief based, in part, on the investigation of counsel, as follows:

I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. Plaintiff brings this action, individually and on behalf of all others

COMPLAINT

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similarly situated, against Defendant alleging violations of 15 U.S.C. § 1693 et seq., which is commonly known as the Electronic Fund Transfer Act and 12 C.F.R. § 205 et seq., commonly known as Regulation E, which contains regulations promulgated by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System to implement the Act (the Act and Regulation E shall hereinafter be collectively referred to as the "EFTA").

- 2. The. EFTA establishes the basic rights, liabilities, and responsibilities of consumers who use electronic fund transfer services and of financial institutions that offer these services. The primary objective of the EFTA and Regulation E is the protection of consumers engaging in electronic fund transfers. 12 C.F.R. § 205.1(b). The EFTA requires specific disclosures be given by operators of automated teller machines ("ATMs") to users of ATMs, prior to the imposition of a fee for using an ATM. 15 U.S.C. § 1693b.
- The Congressional findings and declaration of purpose regarding the 3. EFTA provides:
 - Rights and liabilities undefined (a)

The Congress finds that the use of electronic systems to transfer funds provides the potential for substantial benefits to consumers. However, due to unique characteristics of such systems, the application of existing consumer protection legislation is unclear, leaving the rights and liabilities of consumers, financial institutions and intermediaries in electronic fund transfers undefined.

Purposes (b)

- 4. The EFTA specifically requires that ATM machines must have a posted notice attached on or at the machine informing consumers of the imposition of an ATM surcharge. 15 U.S.C. § 1693b(d)(3).
- 5. This case is brought under the EFTA based upon the fact that Defendant has imposed ATM fees without providing any posted notice as required by the EFTA.
- 6. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated, brings this action against Defendant based on Defendant's violation of the EFTA. Plaintiff seeks, on behalf of himself and the proposed class, statutory damages, costs and attorney's fees, all of which are expressly made available by statute, 15 U.S.C. § 1693m. Plaintiff does not seek actual damages. Plaintiff also seeks a permanent injunction enjoining Defendant from continuing its unlawful practice of negligently, willfully, or knowingly violating the provisions of the EFTA which prohibit the improper imposition of ATM fees.

II. PARTIES

7. Plaintiff is a natural person who resides in Los Angeles County, California and used a certain ATM owned and operated by 7-ELEVEN, INC. and located at 18514 Plummer, Northridge, CA 91324, within one year of the filing of

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this Complaint, and was charged an ATM surcharge fee at the ATM alleged in this Complaint.

8. Defendant 7-Eleven, Inc., is an incidental sales convenience store authorized and doing business in California. Defendant 7-Elevan may be served through its manager, Donna Dunn at 18514 Plummer, Northridge, CA 91324.

III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 9. This Court has federal question jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1337 and 15 U.S.C. 1693m(g) because this action arises under the Electronic Fund Transfers Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1693 et seq.
- Venue in this judicial district is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391 in that 10. this is the judicial district in which a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims occurred.

IV. BACKGROUND

A. **Electronic Funds Transfer Act**

- "Electronic funds transfer" is defined □as "any transfer of funds . . . 11. which is initiated through an electronic terminal, telephonic instrument, or computer or magnetic tape so as to order, instruct, or authorize a financial institution to debit or credit an account. Such term includes ... automated teller machine transactions" 15 U.S.C. § 1693a(6); see also 12 C.F.R. § 205.3(b).
 - Defendant is an "automated teller machine operator" as that term is 12.

defined by 12 C.F.R. § 205.16(a), which states: "Automated teller machine operator
means any person that operates an automated teller machine at which a consumer
initiates an electronic fund transfer or a balance .inquiry and that does not hold the
account to or from which the transfer is made, or about which an inquiry is made."
13. 15 U.S.C. § 1693b(d)(3)(A) and (B), and the implementing regulation,

13. 15 U.S.C. § 1693b(d)(3)(A) and (B), and the implementing regulation 12 C.F.R. § 205 16(b) and (c), require an ATM operator who imposes a fee on a consumer for "host transfer services" (an electronic fund transfer or a balance inquiry) to provide notice to the consumer of the fee before the consumer is committed to the transaction. Specifically, 12 C.F.R. § 205.16(b) states:

General. An automated teller machine operator that imposes a fee on a consumer for initiating an electronic fund transfer or a balance inquiry shall:

- (1) Provide notice that a fee will be imposed for providing electronic fund transfer services or a balance inquiry; and
- (2) Disclose the amount of the fee.
- 14. 15 U.S.C. § 1693b(d)(3)(B), and its implementing regulation, 12 C.F.R. § 205.16(c), specifies the notice to the provided to consumers. 12 C.F.R. § 205.16(c) states:
 - (c) Notice requirement. To meet the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section, an automated teller machine operator must comply with the following:

(1)	On the machine. Post in a prominent and conspicuous
	location on or at the automated teller machine a notice
	that:

- (i) A fee will be imposed for providing electronic fund transfer services or for a balance inquiry; or
- (ii) A fee may be imposed for providing electronic fund transfer services or for a balance inquiry, but the notice in this paragraph (c)(1)(ii) may be substituted for the notice in paragraph (c)(1)(i) only if there are circumstances under which a fee will not be imposed for such services; and
- (2) Screen or paper notice. Provide the notice required by paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this section either by showing it on the screen of the automated teller machine or by providing it on paper, before the consumer is committed to paying a fee.
- 15. Pursuant to this regulation, the notice physically attached to the ATM must comply with 12 C.F.R. § 205.16(c), either by stating that a fee will be imposed, or if there are circumstances in which a fee will not be imposed, that a fee may be imposed.
- 16. 15 U.S.C. § 1693b(d)(3)(C), and its implementing regulation, 12 C.F.R. § 205.16(e), provide that no fee may be imposed by an ATM operating in connection with any electronic fund transfer initiated by a consumer for which a

notice is required unless the consumer is provided the notices required pursuant to
12 C.F.R. § 205.16(c). Specifically, 15 U.S.C. § 1693b(d)(3)(C) states in relevant
part:

- (C) Prohibition on fees not properly disclosed and explicitly assumed by consumer. No fee may be imposed by any automated teller machine operator in connection with any electronic fund transfer initiated by a consumer for which a notice is required under subparagraph (A), unless -
 - (i) the consumer receives such notice in accordance with subparagraph (B); and
 - (ii) the consumer elects to continue in the manner necessary to effect the transaction after receiving such notice.

Similarly, 12 C.F.R § 205.16(e) provides that:

- (e) Imposition of fee. An automated teller machine operator may impose a fee on a consumer for initiating an electronic fund transfer or a balance inquiry only if
 - (1) The consumer is provided the notices required under paragraph (c) of this section, and
 - (2) The consumer elects to continue the transaction or inquiry after receiving such notices.

17. In connection with 2006 amendments to the EFTA, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve published its Final Rule and official staff interpretation which, inter alia, explained the EFTA's disclosure requirements as follows:

The final rule clarifies the two-part disclosure scheme established in Section 904(d)(3)(B) of the EFTA. The first disclosure, on ATM signage posted on or at the ATM, allows consumers to identify quickly ATMs that generally charge a fee for use. This disclosure is not intended to provide a complete disclosure of the fees associated with the particular type of transaction the consumer seeks to conduct. Until a consumer uses his or her card at an ATM, the ATM operator does not know whether a surcharge will be imposed for that particular consumer. Rather, it is the second, more specific disclosure, made either on the ATM screen or an ATM receipt, that informs the customer before he or she is committed to the transactions whether, in fact, a fee will be imposed for the transaction and the amount of the fee.

71 C.F.R. 1638, 1656 (emphasis added).

- 18. Thus, the statute and regulation require that a physical notice must be displayed informing consumers that the ATM imposes a surcharge and that the ATM screen must definitively state that a fee will be imposed, before that fee is imposed.
- 19. The EFTA imposes strict liability upon ATM operators that fail to comply with its disclosure requirements. See Burns v. First American Bank, 2006 WL 3754820, *6 (N.D. Ill. Dec. 19, 2006). A plaintiff seeking statutory damages

under the EFTA need not prove that he or she sustained any actual financial loss, or that he or she relied upon the lack of mandatory disclosure as an inducement to enter into a transaction. Burns, 2006 WL 3754820, *6 ("Section 1693b(d)(3) prohibits an ATM operator from charging a fee unless it provides notice of its fee on the machine and on the screen, period, no mention of a necessary scienter.")

20. The notice referenced in 15 U.S.C. §1693f has no arguable applicability to Plaintiff's claims because, among other things, Plaintiff is not an account holder of Defendant.

B. Defendant's Conduct

- 21. Defendant is an ATM operator regulated under the EFTA, 15 U.S.C. § 1693 et seq. and 12 C.F.R. Part 205 (Regulation E), as that term is defined in 12 C.F.R. § 205.16(a).
- 22. Defendant owns and operates the ATMs identified in ¶ 7 (7-Eleven ATM).
- 23. The 7-Eleven ATM permits consumers to perform electronic fund transfers, as defined in 12 C.F.R. § 205.3.
- 24. The 7-Eleven ATM imposes a fee on consumers who withdraw cash from the 7-Eleven ATMs.
- 25. Defendant failed to post on or at the 7-Eleven ATM a notice that a fee will be imposed for withdrawing cash or for a balance inquiry, resulting in Defendant's improper imposition of a fee to users of the 7-Eleven ATM.

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	26.	Defendant's failure to post the required notice on or at the 7-Eleven
ATM	has re	sulted in frequent and persistent non-compliance with the EFTA. Said
violat	ions of	f the EFTA have adversely affected hundreds or thousands of
consu	mers.	

- Despite knowing of the ATM fee notice provisions of the EFTA, 27. Defendant has intentionally violated and continues to violate the EFTA by failing to post the required ATM fee notices at the 7-Eleven ATM and improperly imposing ATM fees.
- Defendant's non-compliance with the ATM fee notice requirements of 28. the EFTA, and subsequent imposition of a fee, did not result from a bona fide error.

Plaintiff's Electronic Funds Transfers With Defendant C.

- Plaintiff is a consumer as defined in 12 C.F.R. § 205.2(e). 29.
- On October 12, 2011, Plaintiff used the 7-Eleven ATM described in 30. this Complaint in order to conduct an electronic funds transfer involving the withdrawal of cash.
- The 7-Eleven ATM did not and does not have the fee notice required 31. by 15 U.S.C. § 1693b(d)(3) and 12 C.F.R. § 205.16 as it did not have any sign affixed to it or in close proximity to it informing consumers that use of the 7-Eleven ATM will or may result in an ATM surcharge.
- Plaintiff was in fact assessed a \$2.95 ATM surcharge fee for 32. withdrawing cash from the 7-Eleven ATM.

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V. CLASS ALLEGATIONS

Plaintiff brings this class action on behalf of himself and all other 33. similarly situated persons pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

34. Plaintiff seeks to represent a class of similarly situated persons, consisting of (a) all consumer's (b) who initiated an electronic funds transfer at the 7-Eleven ATM described in ¶7 and (c) were assessed a fee for withdrawing cash from the 7-Eleven ATM described in ¶ 7, (d) on or after the date one year prior to the filing of this action and continuing through the trial of this cause or until the Defendant is compliant with the ETFA by posting the appropriate notice. (the "Class").

- Congress expressly intended "that the EFTA would be enforced, in 35. part, through private class actions." 15 U.S.C. § 1693m(a).
- Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that there are at 36. minimum, hundreds of members of the Class.
- 37. The exact size of the Class and the identities of the individual members thereof are ascertainable through Defendant's records. Defendant has exclusive control of this information.
- 38. Members of the Class may be notified of the pendency of this action by techniques and forms commonly used in class actions, such as by published notice, e-mail notice, website notices, first class mail, or combinations thereof, or by other methods suitable to this class and deemed necessary and/or appropriate by this

Court.

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Defendant can generate data for its ATMs identifying each transaction 39. in which a fee was charged. The data will include the date of the transaction, the amount of the fee and the personal account number ("PAN") for the consumer. The PAN includes a bank identification number ("BIN"). This information can be used to identify class members.

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The Class is sufficiently numerous to make bringing all parties before 40. the Court impractical.

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Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the members of the Class. 41. The claims of the Plaintiff and members of the Class are based on the same legal theories and arise from the same unlawful conduct. Plaintiff and Class members seek recovery of statutory, not actual, damages.

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Plaintiff and members of the Class were each users of the 7-Eleven 42. ATM since the date one year prior to the filing of this action.

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Plaintiff and each member of the Class were illegally charged an ATM 43. fee as a result of Defendant's failure to comply with the ATM fee notice requirements of the EFTA.

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Plaintiff and each class member received an inadequate notice 44. regarding the imposition of an ATM fee by the 7-Eleven ATM.

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The questions of law and fact common to the Class predominate over 45. questions which may affect individual members, including:

(a)	Whether Defendant was at all relevant times during the class
	period an automated teller machine operator which imposed a fee
	on consumers for providing host transfer services to those
	consumers;

- (b) Whether Defendant is the operator of the 7-Eleven ATM;
- (c) Whether Defendant complied, at all times during the class period, with the notice requirements of 15 U.S.C. § 1693b(d)(3) and 12 C.F.R. § 205.16; and
- (d) Whether Plaintiff and members of the Class are entitled to statutory damages, costs and attorney's fees for Defendant's acts and conduct.
- 46. Plaintiff can and will adequately and vigorously represent and protect the interests of the members of the Class. Plaintiff has no interests antagonistic to the members of the Class. Plaintiff has retained counsel able, competent and qualified to prosecute this class action litigation.
- 47. Plaintiff and Plaintiff's counsel will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class.
- 48. A class action is superior to other available means for the fair and efficient adjudication of the claims of the Class. While the aggregate damages that may be awarded to the members of the Class are likely to be substantial, the damages suffered by the individual members of the Class are relatively small. As a result, the expense and burden of individual litigation makes it economically

infeasible and procedurally impracticable for each member of the Class to individually seek redress for the wrongs done to them. Plaintiff does not know of any other litigation concerning this controversy already commenced by or against any member of the Class. The likelihood of the individual members of the Class prosecuting separate claims is remote. Individualized litigation would also present the potential for varying, inconsistent, or contradictory judgments, and would increase the delay and expense to all parties and the court system resulting from multiple trials of the same factual issues. In contrast, the conduct of this matter as a class action presents fewer management difficulties conserves the resources of the parties and the court system, and would protect the rights of each member of the Class. Plaintiff knows of no difficulty to be encountered in the management of this action that would preclude its maintenance as a class action.

49. Defendant has acted on grounds generally applicable to the members of the Class, thereby making appropriate final injunctive relief with respect to the Class as a whole.

VI. CLAIMS

A. Count 1: Violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1693 et seq. and 12 C.F.R. 205 et seq.

- 50. Plaintiff incorporates and re-alleges the above numbered paragraphs by reference.
- 51. Plaintiff asserts this claim on behalf of himself and the Class against Defendant.
 - 52. Defendant failed to provide notices to the Plaintiff and the Class as

required by 15 U.S.C. § 1693b(d)(3) and 12 C.F.R. § 205.16(c), and imposed a fee i
violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1693b(d)(3)(C) and 12 C.F.R. §§ 205.16(b) and (e).

- 53. 15 U.S.C. § 1693b(d)(3)(C), and its implementing regulation, 12 C.F.R. § 205.l6(e) prohibit the imposition and receipt of a fee for conducting an electronic fund transfer unless a notice of the fee is posted in a prominent and conspicuous location on or at the ATM.
- 54. Defendant imposed and received a fee in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1693b(d)(3)(C), and its implementing regulation, 12 C.F.R. § 205.16(e).
- 55. As a result of Defendant's violations of the EFTA, Defendant is liable to Plaintiff and the class for statutory damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1693m.
- 56. As a result of Defendant's violations of the EFTA, Plaintiff and the members of the Class are entitled to recover costs of suit and their reasonable attorney's fees.
- 57. Defendant's conduct is continuing, and, unless restrained, Defendant will continue to engage in violations of the EFTA.

REQUEST FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and the members of the Class, prays for:

A. An order certifying the Class and appointing Plaintiff as the representative of the Class, and appointing undersigned counsel as Class Counsel;

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В.	An award to Plaintiff and the members of the Class of statutory
	damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C § 1693m;
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- Payment of costs of suit herein incurred pursuant to 15 U.S.C §
 1693m(a)(3);
- D. Payment of reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C § 1693m(a)(3);
- E. A permanent injunction enjoining Defendant from engaging in conduct in violation of the EFTA; and
- F. For other and further relief as the Court may deem proper.

JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury.

DATED: November 22, 2011

Respectfully submitted,

PANISH SHEA & BOYLE LLP

PETER L. KAUFMAN

Attorneys for PLAINTIFFS

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

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Civil cases are deemed related if (Check all boxes that apply)	A. Arise fr B. Call for C. For other	om the same or closely related transactions, happenings, or events; or determination of the same or substantially related or similar questions of law and fact; or er reasons would entail substantial duplication of labor if heard by different judges; or the same patent, trademark or copyright, and one of the factors identified above in a, b or c also is present.	
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* Los Angeles, Orange, San Ber Note: In land condemnation case		de, Ventura, Santa Bartara for San Luis Obispo Counties of the tract of land involved	
X. SIGNATURE OF ATTORNE	OD DDO DED	Date NOVEMBER 21, 2011	
A. SIGNATURE OF ATTORNE	II (ORTROTER)	PETER MAOFMAN	
or other papers as required by	law. This form, ar	Civil Cover Sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings oproved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required pursuant to Local Rule 3-1 is not filed pose of statistics venue and initiating the civil docket sheet. (For more detailed instructions, see separate instructions sheet.)	
Key to Statistical codes relating t	o Social Security (Cases:	
Nature of Suit Code	Abbreviation	Substantive Statement of Cause of Action	
861	HIA	All claims for health insurance benefits (Medicare) under Title 18, Part A, of the Social Security Act, as amended. Also, include claims by hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, etc., for certification as providers of services under the program. (42 U.S.C. 1935FF(b))	
862	BL	All claims for "Black Lung" benefits under Title 4, Part B, of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. (30 U.S.C. 923)	
863	DIWC	All claims filed by insured workers for disability insurance benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended; plus all claims filed for child's insurance benefits based on disability. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))	
863	DIWW	All claims filed for widows or widowers insurance benefits based on disability under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))	
864	SSID	All claims for supplemental security income payments based upon disability filed under Title 16 of the Social Security Act, as amended.	
865	RSI	All claims for retirement (old age) and survivors benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42 U.S.C. (g))	
CV-71 (05/08)		CIVIL COVER SHEET Page 2 of 2	

CIVIL COVER SHEET

CV-71 (05/08)

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UNITED STATES I	DISTRICT COURT CT OF CALIFORNIA
CHOMAS CHAYRA, Individually and on	CASE NUMBER
cehalf of all others Similarly Situated, PLAINTIFF(S)	EV11-09838 THN(M)
v.	
7-ELEVEN, INC.	SUMMONS
DEFENDANT(S).	
TO: DEFENDANT(S): 7-ELEVEN, INC.	
A lawsuit has been filed against you.	
Within 21 days after service of this sum	mons on you (not counting the day you received it), you
must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached x	Complaint amended complaint
must serve on the plantitud an answer to the attached A	le 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer
counterclaim cross-claim of a motion under Ku	whose address is
or motion must be served on the plaintiff's attorney, Pl	eter kaufman , whose address is
Panish Shea & Boyle, 11111 Santa Monica	Blvd, Ste 700, LACA 90025 . If you fail to do so,
judgment by default will be entered against you for the	relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file
your answer or motion with the court.	
you allower of more and man and a second	
NOV 2 9 2011	Clerk, U.S. District Court
	JULIE PRADO
Dated:	By: Deputy Clerk
	(Seal of the Court)
[Use 60 days if the defendant is the United States or a United Sta	ates agency, or is an officer or employee of the United States. Allowed
60 days by Rule 12(a)(3)].	
	•

SUMMONS

CCD-1A

CV-01A (12/07)

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

NOTICE OF ASSIGNMENT TO UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE FOR DISCOVERY

This case has been assigned to District Judge Jacqueline Nguyen and the assigned discovery Magistrate Judge is Michael Wilner.

The case number on all documents filed with the Court should read as follows:

CV11- 9838 JHN (MRWx)

Pursuant to General Order 05-07 of the United States District Court for the Central District of California, the Magistrate Judge has been designated to hear discovery related motions.

All discovery related motions should be noticed on the calendar of the Magistrate Judge
NOTICE TO COUNSEL
A copy of this notice must be served with the summons and complaint on all defendants (if a removal action is filed, a copy of this notice must be served on all plaintiffs).
Subsequent documents must be filed at the following location:

Failure to file at the proper location will result in your documents being returned to you.

[X] Western Division

312 N. Spring St., Rm. G-8 Los Angeles, CA 90012

Southern Division

411 West Fourth St., Rm. 1-053

Santa Ana, CA 92701-4516

[] Eastern Division

3470 Twelfth St., Rm. 134

Riverside, CA 92501